Usually these things were exactly double in value to the Kaska. Thus a cup of gun powder procured from the Tlingit for five beaver skins was sold by the Tahltan to the Kaska for ten beaver skins, and other things in proportion. 437 439

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, PUBERTY, MARRIAGE AND DEATH

Pregnancy

It is believed plenty of exercise and light work is best for a pregnant woman. A woman should be energetic and busy during pregnancy, thus exercising her body and mind. She should not, however, do any hard lifting, nor should she engage in violent exercises nor in any kind of work or amusement in which she would have to twist her body in any unusual way. Engaging in any of these things might cause the child to become misplaced in her womb or possibly cause the string to become misplaced. A woman who was lazy during pregnancy, sat down a great deal, did little work and ate a great deal would have a hard birth, for the child would be too big. If a woman engages in light exercise nearly all day long everyday and eats moderately or sparingly she will have as a rule an easy birth. Her child will not be too large and it will be healthier or stronger. 843

Some pregnant women make a practice of rising early many mornings. In the early morning they take a long walk or walk around much and also take a bath. Some think that to do this will make the child to be born fair of complexion.

A pregnant woman should not see any dead animal or corpse. If she saw the dead bodies of people and animals her child would die or be stillborn.

She should not eat to excess, especially of fat meats. This would make her soft, fat and lazy. Some women do not eat the flesh of any very young animal during pregnancy and this restriction is sometimes also enjoined on the husband.

Child Birth

Small brush lodges were made for women about to be confined. They were of no particular style and conformed in shape and structure to the ordinary brush 344 347

844 lodges. Some were excavated slightly so that the in-
349 side consisted of a shallow hole or depression a
little lower than the base of the lodge walls. These
lodges were carpeted with moss or dry grass. Near one
end of the lodge a short pole was sunk solidly in the
844 ground. This formed a vertical post in height about
equal to a person sitting on the ground. The butt end
of a lighter pole was sunk in the floor of the lodge
a short distance from the post and the smaller end bent
down and fastened to the latter at a point a little
below the top of same. This pole formed a kind of
quarter circle or half bow and was adjusted for length
and height to suit the woman's convenience. Over this
pole the woman leaned with her arms embracing it or
holding it when giving birth, or at least when having
birth pains. The woman was attended by one or more
[759] (generally several) female relatives or neighbors who
had experience or who had given birth to children.
The woman's husband and all men were excluded from
presence at the confinement and they were not expected
to give assistance of any kind. Only in cases of child
birth when no women happened to be near, did the woman's
[845] husband attend to his wife. When giving birth was
difficult or protracted the midwife (or attendant
women) helped delivery by kneading and massaging down-
wards, etc., on the belly and sometimes also with her
hand in dilating and assisting the passage of the child.
Hot drinks were also given the woman. Midwives gen-
erally felt along the neck of the child being born to
see the string did not encircle the neck and cause
choking. Only in cases of very hard births was the
845 assistance of men or doctors sought. These men were
759 shamans or others who had knowledge of the mystery of
birth. All of them had actually witnessed the birth
of game, viz., had seen goats, caribou and other game
animals giving birth to their young. They also in
communion with their manitous had received knowledge
about the mystery of birth or had been instructed by
game mothers regarding same. Some of these men had
helped game to give birth and they were considered the
most powerful of this class of men. Generally they
had helped a female of some kind of game to give birth
by striking or touching her with gun cover, a stick,
switch, skin, etc. Some helped in other ways such as
by painting her red. Thus each man differed somewhat
in method and experience. No two were exactly alike
in their knowledge and procedure. When a case was
much protracted and had gone beyond the powers of the
midwives one of these men was summoned. Before
entering he went around the confinement lodge sunwise,

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

342 piled snow high all around the central space. The warmth of the fire caused the snow to freeze, a condition that insured better protection from wind. At other times people [492] dug into a snowbank to fashion an overnight shelter. Snow shovels were not widely used among the Liard River Indians, so that people moved snow with the aid of snow- [372] shoes. A snowhouse contained a fire, the smoke of which escaped through a hole in the roof.

●349 In summer threat of an enemy attack led the people to excavate pits near the camp 342 where young children could be secreted and covered with caribou hides (possibly camouflaged with earth?). Birch-bark, semisubterranean, and grass-mat houses remained unidentified by informants. Log cabins commenced to enjoy popularity after the intro- [177] duction of the steel ax following white contact. Skin-covered tipis are said to have been introduced by a Fort Liard family. It is interesting to note that while anthropological thinking might classify together the sod- and skin-covered conical lodge Indians tend to distinguish them sharply.

352 Appurtenances remained scarce in aboriginal dwellings. Spruce brush or grass pro- 513 vided floor covering, the grass first being softened by rubbing between the hands. People especially favored grass for sleeping places. Raised platforms did not find a place in houses and stuffed pillows are also denied. Sleepers lay covered by robes of woven rabbit or ground-hog skins or blankets containing a number of beaver and marten pelts sewn together. Drifted snow and other debris were brushed away from dwellings with a willow broom.

343 Other than the cache, non-residential structures were represented only by the sudatory, which was built over ground that had been excavated to a depth of about 12 inches. Atop the excavated space, willow poles were bent and lashed together, following which a sheathing of tanned skins went over the framework. A hole for ventilation opened in the top of the dome. Sweat houses contained no entry, the user simply lifting the lower edge of the cover when he wished to enter or leave. Hot rocks dashed with water furnished steam as well as a heat so intense that the bather might be driven to lift a corner 349 of the cover to admit cool air. Ceremonial structures found no place in the Kaska settlement and even the brush enclosed dance or ceremonial plaza appears to have been lacking.[4]

372 The efficiency of any dwelling in winter depended closely on fire. Heat also constituted a prerequisite for many technological operations, ranging from cooking to snowshoe making. Two versions of a common myth explaining the origin of fire (or rather of pyrites) are given below.

372 One fellow [Bear?] had this rock and didn't want to give it to the Indians. He wanted to keep it. 539 Another fellow stole the stone and gave it to Fox Man who ran away. Tsuguya [a culture hero] secured the rock and made fire with it. Then he threw the rock all around, all over the country, so that everybody could have fire (X).

Crow and Wolf held a meeting. This took place before there were any people in the world. Crow had been in the habit of flying around and when any animal killed meat he would be on hand to take some

[4] Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 89; Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 52, 122, 125.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tselon

342 casionally reached a diameter of 30 feet and accomodated several families, smaller structures built in this style and housing only one or two families occurred more frequently. Birch-bark and grass-mat buildings were unknown. A Kechika River man appeared vaguely familiar with the snowhouse but would venture no description of its form or [462] construction. Women erected houses and were believed to construct better structures than men. Qualities governing selection of a dwelling site included "hard" (i.e., dry) ground and accessibility to water. Dry wood could be found nearly everyplace. People never excavated the ground of a house site.

592 Within a dwelling women occupied the area nearest the entry, while a husband had his place toward the rear. Daughters slept near the mother, sons farther back from the 513 entry. Infants rested in skin hammocks suspended over the mothers' sleeping places. Along the Kechika River, at least, babies used hammocks of plaited, split spruce roots [354] lined with skins. Specially constructed fireplaces or sleeping platforms did not occur. People lived on a carpet of spruce brush and at night covered themselves with robes of sewn marten and ground-hog pelts or plaited rabbit-skin. Grizzly bear robes, because of their size and warmth, provided especially desirable blankets. Some people used pillows made by packing duck or partridge feathers in a smoked skin bag.

343 The sweat house, built for the use of both sexes, was the only type of non-residential ● [349] structure. Hemispherical in shape and about four feet high it contained a roof opening *designed to permit the escape of excess heat and steam.* No ceremonial enclosures occurred.

372 Both sexes showed equal skill in kindling fire by the strike-a-light method.[7] One 177 informant denied the use of fire drills (S) but another man constructed a bow drill which, he claimed, had been displaced from the culture because of its poorer efficiency compared to the use of flint and pyrites (WT). Boys and girls commonly sought fuel with some assistance from adults. In winter when camp moved women carried fire on glowing poles 15 or 18 inches long. Fire kept through the night if banked with earth or ashes.

342 *Tselona.* Winter dwellings cofformed to the usual two types: conical with a framework of poles and inverted V-shaped. Roofing utilized spruce brush, moss, and sod but never grass thatch. Occasionally a household possessed sufficient skins to cover a conical lodge. [343] In summer the Indians did not live in houses and only rain impelled them to put up hasty lean-tos. Surprisingly the construction of sweat houses met with denial. In the

[7] A tale collected by Teit tells how Bear's monopoly of the fire stone was broken by a little bird who visited Bear's lodge to warm himself. While picking lice from the Bear the bird broke the latter's belt and flew off with the stone, passing this object to a number of waiting animals. Last to receive the prize was Fox whose flight to a high mountain exhausted Bear. "Fox broke up the fire-stone on the top of the mountain, and threw the fragments a piece to each tribe. Thus the many tribes all over the earth obtained fire; *and this is why there is fire in the rocks and woods everywhere now.*" As a result of losing fire Bear made a hole in the earth to keep himself warm in winter—the origin of the bear's den! Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 443–444.

It will be recalled that the Upper Liard Indians made fire with the strike-a-light method. The Tlingit (including the Chilkat) used fire drills, including the bow type, as well as percussion methods of fire making. Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 202.